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Sontag Explains CIA Role

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Raymond J. Sontag, professor emeritus of history, explained yesterday he served the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for two and one-half years by analyzing general trends in foreign countries.

He told of his service in the CIA in a letter printed yesterday in the Ice Box. He explained more about the nature of his work while on leave from the University to The Daily Californian later yesterday.

Sontag was a member of the Board of National Estimates, which consisted of economists, political scientists, lawyers, a retired admiral and general, and a former ambassador, as well as two other historians.

This board prepared "intelligence estimates" of various countries which were sent to the National Security Council and eventually to the President.

"These intelligence estimates summarize the situation in some part of the world," Sontag said. "They give the drift of events and an estimate of how trends will look during a given time."

Another function of the board

was to prepare "probable consequence estimates." In this case, a policy-maker would suggest five or six courses of action for a particular area in which American foreign policy was under discussion.

Other agencies besides the CIA, such as the State Department and the Pentagon, would contribute to these estimates. The total result would be an evaluation of the probable consequences of each proposed action.

"The work was very much like work we do in history," Sontag explained. "We move from point A in the past to point B in the past, seeing how we got there and why. The only difference in intelligence work is that point B is in the future. We move from point A in the past through the present and project how things are likely to look in the future," he said.

"Nobody is willing to see that the CIA is not an independent agency," he continued. "It exists as an organ of the National Security Council, which is controlled by the President. The policies are laid down by the Presi-

dent, not the CIA."

Sontag also related that he was asked to work with the Board of National Estimates by the chairman of the Board at that time, William Langer. He later talked with Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, director of the CIA, and decided that he would take the job.

He left the University in January, 1951, and was on academic leave until the fall of 1953.

He also mentioned he had already been getting repercussions from his letter. People were trying to find a connection between himself and Dan McIntosh since he and McIntosh lived in the same apartment for a while. "There just is none," he stated.

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